



October 2009

The Story

www.druidhillsumc.org

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From the Pastor

On Following God

In the letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul writes, “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” How does one follow a heavenly call in an earthly context? And what does Paul mean in saying we must forget what lies behind?

Those of you who were in worship on Sunday heard me speak about God’s giving us power to speak life or blessing into people’s lives and at the same time giving us power to speak death or cursing into their lives as well. Being a people of blessing rather than a people of cursing means we have to leave behind those things that block us from receiving grace and follow God’s lead so we can fully become a people of blessing.

[An interruption has occurred just as I am composing this. A toddler, whose name I do not know, “escaped” from her mother on the way to DHUMC preschool, and found her way into my office. She stared at me for a minute, said nothing, and then smiled just as the mother dashed in and swooped her up into her arms, apologizing for the interruption. I do not feel interrupted. I have been given a morning blessing.]

We are a people who, because of the grace of God, are continually offered signs of grace and blessing. Sometimes they come from unexpected places, but we should always be an expectant people. Then we recognize that we have been given a heavenly call to be lived out in our daily lives. We are to be a people of blessing, “dispatched into a world where death is strong, in order to enact gestures of new life.”

(Dr. Walter Brueggeman)

Blessing,
Rex

Stewardship Corner

by Cliff Richards

“What do we really need to survive and live a fulfilling life?” This has become an opening line in the financial management class I facilitate in my job at Decatur Cooperative Ministry. One of my duties is to lead a class for those receiving financial assistance to prevent eviction, foreclosure or utility disconnection. In one section of the class where we talk about our needs vs. wants we look at an example of a monthly budget and I ask the class which expenses are wants and which expenses are needs. The dictionary on my computer defines “need” as something essential, required or necessary. “Want” is defined as a wish or a desire. Someone in the class always offers food as a need. If we didn’t eat we would perish. Rent or mortgage is a need. If we didn’t have a place to stay we would age much faster. I know this from our homeless neighbors who always look older than their birth certificates say. Clothing is a need. Setting aside the shock of seeing Cliff naked, we would be at a higher risk of illness if we didn’t wear something to keep us warm, especially in the cold winter months. But, what if we ate dinner at Red Lobster every night? What if we were single and lived in a 5 bedroom house? What if we wore \$1000 suits every day? Those are wants, not needs.

After we talk about wants vs. needs, I direct the conversation into what motivates our spending. What are our priorities when we write a check, swipe the debit card or buy something on line? Sometimes in the class a client will admit purchasing furniture through a “Rent-to-Own” store. Instead of saving for several months to buy, they give in to a high interest rate to obtain a couch immediately. By the time they’ve paid off that couch, they could have purchased 2 couches. We Americans are so focused on immediate pleasure that we are willing to sacrifice the future through the decisions we make today. What could we do with the money we could save if we plan ahead for large purchases? Setting financial goals and an action

plan for those goals is an important lesson to learn on the path to a fulfilling life.

Several years ago, because I did not set my own priorities, I was not able to meet my commitments to the church. At the end of the year I came up short in my pledge to the church so I am speaking from personal experience. Now I always ask myself: What are my "Wants and Needs"? What are my budgeting priorities? With planning, we can honor commitments or pledges made at the beginning of the year.

Annual Yard Sale Report



Many thanks to all who donated items, priced them, and worked at our yard sale on September 26th.

Twenty three people gave approximately 120 volunteer hours. By working together we raised \$920.00. The funds will be used to

support outreach ministries such as inviting and welcoming all people to our church, caring for our neighbors in need, and continuing to rebuild New Orleans following the flooding there.

Associate Pastor on Leave

Dear Druid Hills family:

Many of you know that in addition to my work as Part Time Minister to Children and Youth, I am employed as a Supervisor-in-Training in a program called Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Saint Joseph's Hospital. I moved to Atlanta from Texas in 2006 for this training. After some prerequisite courses, I was certified in October, 2007, as a supervisory Candidate by the Southeast Region of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, an inter-faith organization.

CPE is an experiential training program for people—mostly, but not all, pastors—who are interested in becoming chaplains. Seminaries offer course credit for CPE, and many denominational groups (including some United Methodist annual conferences) require it for ordination. Accredited CPE Centers are usually connected not to schools but to hospitals, churches, or other agencies that have need of pastoral ministries.

I have supervised enough students at Saint Joseph's—five groups—to move to the next level. That requires writing three theory position papers—and I am ready! Because this writing requires both theoretical knowledge and reflective understanding and wisdom, I have discerned that I need a bit more time and space than usual. The Staff Parish Team has graciously worked with me to give me five weeks of leave so that I can finish. I am grateful for this gift, and excited to write, but I will miss the community at DHUMC! You won't see me at church, because I'll be glued to the computer! I will, however, still be working at the hospital and continuing the other aspects of my training.

You may be wondering what this means for the children and youth programming we offer...and the answer is not much. You see, most of the children and youth ministry at our church cannot be done by me alone; it takes a large community of volunteers teaching Sunday school, being youth sponsors, helping with VBS, and even bringing youth snack suppers to make youth and children's ministry happen.

During my absence, the following folks will be doing children's sermons: Dale and Mary Lynn Merkle, Pat Ziebart, Michael and Camille Vaughan, and Cynthia and Larry Daniel. Our Sunday School teachers, Katie Paden, Elizabeth Lamback, and Charlotte Udell will continue to provide wonderful leadership, and our new Candler Con Ed student Jared Stine will be doing youth Sunday School. Finally, our fabulous youth sponsors, Rachel Kaney, Kristin Unzicker, and Peter Kinnaird will facilitate Sunday night youth group, with some special programs planned with Beth Corrie, Annie Duncan, and Molly Reilly from the Youth Theological Institute - and there will be bowling with the North Decatur UMC youth group. As you can see, we have some wonderful volunteers who help our church provide relationships through which our children and youth can learn more about the love of God. There are always more opportunities for YOU to be involved as well!

Thank you for the gift of this time, and I will see you on November 1st!

Blessings, peace, and love,
Melinda

Lay Leader's Lines

by Dan Browning

Priorities - things that are regarded as more important than others; the right to take precedence or to proceed before others. At least that's what my dictionary software says. When we talk about the church, it can be tricky to agree on priorities, mostly because so many things we do are important that we hate to rank any one above the other. But in the real world of limited resources, the truly faithful response is to set priorities and decide what things are essential to the mission of our church.

Mission - an important assignment, vocation or calling. What is our calling as a church? What have we been "assigned" to do as Christians? According to the "official" UMC line, we are called "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Sounds good, right? But how do we go about doing this? This appears to be a two-part mission statement – first, make disciples; then, transform the world, or more specifically, teach and equip them to transform the world. So those must be our two priorities...easy enough. First, how do we make disciples?

Disciple - a follower or student of a teacher or leader. For Christians, this specifically refers to a follower or student of Jesus. To be someone's follower or student in this sense means more than simply taking notes and passing an exam at the end of the term. Disciples are called to learn what the teacher has to teach, by words and by example, and to put those teachings into place in their own lives. That is, the students should become more and more like the teacher. Once the students are transformed in this way, they are then ready to transform others.

Transformation - a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance. When we are transformed as disciples, again, we become more like the person Jesus showed us how to be. Then we are able to go out into the world to transform it, to make it more like the world Jesus envisioned, a world where love, justice, and peace are abundant. This would indeed be a thorough and dramatic change!

OK, so there's the basic outline: We learn in order to be transformed, so that we can go out and transform the world. But remember this – it's a two-part formula. If we try to transform the world without first being transformed ourselves, we lack the internal, spiritual resources necessary to do so. If we are content with "improving" ourselves without genuinely investing ourselves in changing the world, we miss the entire

point of Jesus' call on our lives. We have to do both if we're seeking to live lives that are faithful responses to God's love.

So then, everything we are about in church, everything we say and do, everything on which we spend time and money ought to involve either transforming ourselves into more faithful disciples of Jesus or transforming the world in ways that God desires. As we move into the time in the life of our congregation when we seek to discern new leaders and set our budgetary priorities for the coming year, let's keep these two goals in mind.

I often hear that we, as a church, need to "pay the bills", "keep the lights on", and other similar things. But we should only do these things to the extent that they are really furthering our two-part mission. Am I suggesting, for example, that we bundle up in sweaters and coats in an unheated sanctuary in January so that we can spend the utility savings to feed the hungry? Perhaps that's too outlandish, too radical. Perhaps we need to be more sensible, more reasonable than that. And perhaps the love of God, the love that Jesus taught and lived, is more sensible than outlandish, more reasonable than radical.

But perhaps not.

WELCOME

Scott Francis Hilyard, born August 30



Congratulations to Jean (Office Manager), Greg and Jack Hilyard

New Members: Peter and Erin Drake, 3453 Orchard Circle, Decatur GA 30032;
Erin: sydnire@hotmail.com;
Peter: eyesskyward01@hotmail.com

Radical Love is *Still* Here

by Kristin Unzicker

The United Methodist Church offers "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors." and Druid Hills UMC invites us to "seek to embody a prophetic voice, speaking truth to power in a spirit of love and inclusiveness". We have shortened this united call to service by boldly stating that RADICAL LOVE IS HERE. Throughout the year, we can recall multiple examples of how we have experienced this radical love at DHUMC as well as how we are called to continue to show that radical love in our outreach efforts and in our daily lives. As our resources and budgets get tighter, our call to service doesn't waiver, it simply changes how we respond.

For the past several years, DHUMC has had a table at the Atlanta Pride Festival as part of our reconciling ministry and outreach to the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) community. Although we are not paying for a table at Pride this year due to limited resources, we are still called to represent Christ's inclusive love and to share the message that Radical Love is Here at DHUMC. This year we will be participating in the parade and throughout the festival with signs of our message.

The 2009 theme for the Atlanta Pride Festival is "Pride Begins with You" (<http://atlantapride.org/>). In the same way, Radical Love begins with me and it begins with you. We can still share our message that Radical Love is Here. Many of you have said this is an important message and an important ministry to you. Therefore, join us at the 2009 Atlanta Pride Festival parade to unite our voices and our message.

We need volunteers to donate funds or resources for a new banner that we will carry during the parade and to print brochures. We also need volunteers to join us during the parade on Sunday, November 1st. Additional volunteers who are interested in attending the Pride Festival are asked to share DHUMC brochures and signs of our radical and inclusive love. If you are interested in getting involved in this outreach through funds, resources or during the festival (Oct 31 - Nov 1) please contact Kristin Unzicker (peacecorpskmu@yahoo.com or 404-895-6413) or Annie Duncan (anniesd7@yahoo.com or 404-909-6142).

Relief Help Needed for North GA

Let's keep all of our metro and north Georgia friends, who have suffered greatly from the recent storms and flood, in our prayers. The North Georgia Conference emergency response line is asking churches to make cleaning buckets, bedding kits, health kits, and school kits to assist in recovery efforts. The contents of the various kits can be found by going to the web:

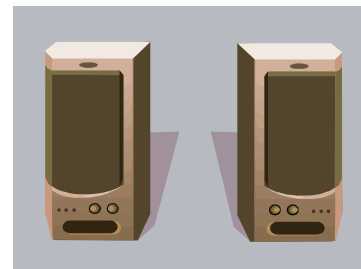
<http://new.gbqm-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/>

On the right, click on the link "Send Relief Supplies." Mike Yoder is the chair of the Conference Disaster Response and he will help guide how to disperse the kits. His e-mail is yoderjm@yahoo.com. The churches have also been asked to take a special offering on Oct. 4 to further assist in recovery efforts.

Welcome Team Update

Thank you to the 65 folks who have provided snacks/labor for the narthex table after church or setup/cleanup help for the 4th Sunday lunch in the past year! Your welcoming efforts are greatly appreciated. Everyone is invited to join in our welcoming efforts at DHUMC. Please mail Janie at janiejoyneralex@yahoo.com to choose your date!

Sound System Theft



Some of you may have noticed that our sound system has not been as clear and distinct as in recent weeks. The reason for this is that the bass woofers that accompanied our system have been stolen. We do not know when this occurred, but noticed them missing when we arrived for worship a couple of Sundays past. Unfortunately, they cannot be replaced by our insurance because the deductible on our policy is \$1000.00 and the cost to replace them is \$600.00.

As you may know, due to the economic conditions of the community we are operating on a very frugal budget this year and this cost is not included in that budget. To replace these, we will need some folks willing to make a special contribution just to this project. If you would like to help us replace these speakers so that all of us can hear better on Sundays, simply mark your contribution "speaker replacement."

A Teachable Moment

By Dale Merkle

I didn't know her name until last week. I like to follow sports, but I had missed the news that in August, Caster Semenya, a teenage runner from South Africa, had become the women's 800-meter world champion. I know her name now, because an Australian newspaper leaked the results of complex genetic and physical tests that allege that Ms. Semenya does not have ovaries or a uterus, but internal testes and AIS, androgen insensitivity syndrome. The International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) says it is considering the results and will decide if she can compete as a woman in the future. Media reports have used the now-discredited term "hermaphrodite" to describe her.

I believe this could be a teachable moment in our congregations and in our homes. As many as one in 1,500 babies is born with external genitals not easily identifiable as male or female, and many more people find out at puberty or later that they do not have organs, chromosomes or hormones that neatly fit into male or female definitions of biological sex.

There is nothing new about biological sexual difference, nor about our call to understand sexual and gender diversity as a blessed part of our lives. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus embraces the eunuchs "who have been so since birth" (Matthew 19:12). The prophet Isaiah promises they will be blessed with "an everlasting name" (Isaiah 56:4-5).

Note: Androgen insensitivity causes an interruption of fetal development of the reproductive system. In AIS the child is conceived with male (XY) sex chromosomes. Embryonic testes develop inside the body and produce androgens, but these male hormones cannot cause male genital development due to a rare insensitivity of the fetal body tissues to androgens. The external genital development continues along female lines, however, development of female internal organs is suppressed by a hormone (MIF, mullerian inhibiting factor) from the fetal testes. Tissue androgen sensitivity is controlled by a gene on the X chromosome, and AIS is an "X-linked recessive" condition, either inherited along the maternal line or, in an estimated third of cases, resulting from a spontaneous mutation.

Church Council Meeting Summary 9/23/09

The Staff Parish Relations Committee is conducting the annual personnel evaluations. Comments from all church members with access to the Internet will be collected using Survey Monkey. Those without internet access will receive a paper copy of the survey included with The Story. There will also be hard copies available at church if you prefer to complete it manually.

Mary Lynn Merkle gave an enthusiastic stewardship report and reported that the theme this year will be to simplify.

ICA has requested that our church host a food bank for the community. Other churches will be hosting other services such as a clothes closet. After much discussion, it was decided we need more information about the available resources and space needs before a food bank plan can be developed for the Church Council to consider.

United Methodist Women

All women are invited to attend a UMW circle meeting this month. Esther Circle will meet Saturday, 10/24 at 10 am at the Lamback home. The Agape Circle will meet Tuesday 10/13 at 11 am in the fellowship hall. The Teresa Circle will meet Tuesday 10/20 at 7 pm at the Merkle Home.

The UMW Executive Board will have an important meeting on Wednesday, October 28 at 4 pm in the Library.

The N. Ga. Annual UMW Meeting will be hosted by our district at Duluth UMC on Saturday, October 3, at 9:30 a.m. Also, please attend our Annual District Meeting at Oak Grove UMC on Sunday, October 11 at 2:30 p.m.

Caring Corner Prayer List as of 9/26/09

Hear, O Lord, my righteous plea;
listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer. Psalm 17:1
Larry Ashmore
Kirsten Browning
Eula Catrett, Joyce Catrett's mother
Billie Crenshaw
Cynthia Daniel
David Jones
Stan Jordan
Darryl Smith
Frank Smith
Jennafer Thompson, Pam Kinnaird's sister

October 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Cello Lessons 11:30am (W) Violin Lessons 2pm (Q)	2 Violin Lessons 2pm (Q) Alanon 7:30pm (Q)	3
4 Sunday School 9:45am Worship 11am Charge Council 12:30 pm (FH) Basketball 3pm Volleyball 5pm Youth Group 5pm (Y) Lectinary Study 6:30 pm	5 Staff Meeting 10am (B) Cello lessons 2pm (Q) Trustees Mtg 6:30pm (L)	6 Leadership Team 6:30 pm (MTS)	7 DHUMP Mug N Muffin 9:45 (Q) Violin lessons 2pm (W) Outreach Team 6pm (Y) Weight Watchers 6pm (Q) Choir Rehearsal 7pm Women's AA 8pm (Q)	8 Cello Lessons 11:30am (W) Violin Lessons 2pm (Q)	9 ATI Retired Edu Assoc 10am (FH) Violin Lessons 3pm (Q) Alanon 7:30pm (Q) Wedding Rehearsal 5pm	10 12 pm Wedding
11 Sunday School 9:45am Worship 11am Basketball 3pm Volleyball 5pm Youth Group 5pm (Y) Lectinary Study 6:30 pm	12 Staff Meeting 10am (B)	13 UMW Agape Circle 11am (Q) UMW Agape Lunch 12pm (FH) ICM Meeting 6:30pm (FH) Leadership Team 6:30 pm (MTS)	14 Violin lessons 2pm (W) Church Supper 6pm (FH) Program 6:45pm (FH) Weight Watchers 6pm (Q) Choir Rehearsal 7pm Women's AA 8pm (Q)	15 Cello Lessons 11:30am (W) Violin Lessons 2pm (Q)	16 Violin Lessons 3pm (Q) Alanon 7:30pm (Q)	17
18 Sunday School 9:45am Worship 11am Basketball 3pm Volleyball 5pm Youth Group 5pm (Y) Lectinary Study 6:30 pm	19 Staff Meeting 10am (B) Cello lessons 2pm (Q)	20 Cello Lessons 2:30pm (W) UMW Teresa Circle 7pm Merkle home Leadership Team 6:30 pm (MTS)	21 Violin lessons 2pm (W) Weight Watchers 6pm (Q) Finance Team 6:30pm (MTS) Choir Rehearsal 7pm Women's AA 8pm (Q)	22 Cello Lessons 11:30am (W) Violin Lessons 2pm (Q)	23 Violin Lessons 3pm (Q) Alanon 7:30pm (Q)	24 UMW 10am Esther Circle Lamback home
25 Sunday School 9:45am Worship 11am 4 th Sunday Lunch 12:15pm (FH) Basketball 3pm Volleyball 5pm Youth Group 4:30pm (Y) Lectinary Study 6:30 pm	26 Staff Meeting 10am (B) Cello lessons 2pm (Q)	27 Cello Lessons 2:30pm (W) Leadership Team 6:30 pm (MTS)	28 Violin lessons 2pm (W) UMW Exec Bd 4pm (L) Weight Watchers 6pm (Q) Church Council brown bag supper 6pm (FH) Church Council 6:45pm (FH) Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm Women's AA 8pm (Q)	29 Cello Lessons 11:30am (W) Violin Lessons 2pm (Q)	30 Violin Lessons 3pm (Q) Alanon 7:30pm (Q)	31 Church Council 9am-12pm (FH)
B=Blue Room C= Chapel	FH = Fellowship Hall CS= Children's Suite	G=Gym L=Library MTS=Room next to Office	Q = Quillian Room	S = Sanctuary	W = WORECO Room	Y = Youth Room